
what's up doc?



by Dr. Mary Livers

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Hello, Everyone:

As usual it's been another busy week, but it seems like this Friday got here really quickly this week. Sometimes the subject for What's Up. Doc? comes to me early in the week, and sometimes late (and sometimes, like last week, almost not at all). What's been on my mind lately is balance.

I'm not talking about the kind of balance when the officer asks you to walk the line. I'm talking about the kind of balance between work and home, church and recreation. The balance needed to know the difference when you still have a sense of urgency but you're not being in a rush. You see, I have found myself rushing and hurrying so much over the last couple of weeks – being in town then out of town – I started making silly mistakes.

I don't know if any of you have ever done this: leaving your keys in the door and looking everywhere for them, only to find the keys in the door....or losing two umbrellas in two days...leaving your briefcase sitting at the garage door. These are all signs that somebody has to slow down.

I have certainly not provided a good example as a leader, jumping around from one thing to the next. On the other hand, I have the challenge of trying to communicate a sense of urgency along with a sense of calm and purpose at the same time. I will be watching myself, my behavior and reactions to things, and I plan to be very intentional about slowing down and listening to other people. I will try to be better organized, again, ensuring that things that are urgent are dealt with, with balance.

My guess is that many of you can identify with this human trait, and likewise experience the need for that balance. So the next time you see me running down the hall, just ask me, "where's the fire?" That should be a reminder for me to slow down and exhale. I think in this society everything is expected to be immediate and now – at the tip of your finger. Sometimes we have to remind ourselves that it's okay to slow down. The quality of our lives and the lives of those around us will be much improved, if we just slow it down.

On to other things of the week. We had a meeting with our community providers on the Coordinated System of Care (CSoC), along with DHH and DCFS, in an effort to communicate directly with them on the status of CSoC. The meeting was well attended. Thanks to the OJJ staff and community providers who attended. Hopefully, everyone is beginning to see that we are about to make MORE, MAJOR changes. Changes that will be worth making.

Today we had a discussion with Probation and Parole Office team leaders on emergency response. The purpose was to bring everyone together to assess the needs and coordinate our response in the event of the kinds of emergencies that we deal with – floods, hurricanes, tornadoes and escapes from secure care. We have asked Alexandria Regional Manager Johnny Qualls to lead the statewide effort to ensure that we provide command emphasis on the resources they need to carry out their duties in a safe and efficient manner. It was a good meeting and I look forward to giving them the support they need in performing this aspect of our mission.

This week, I also met with the Louisiana District Attorneys Association's Juvenile Justice Task Force to discuss areas of mutual interest and concern. It was also a good meeting with a lot of good discussion. There was another good training session at central office yesterday - a train-the-trainer session on motivational interviewing techniques. It appeared to be a lively session, and according to participants from all over the state, it was well-received.

I was not able to go to Swanson this week, but I understand that staff training on the SAVRY was conducted there over the last two days. This should complete training in the use of the SAVRY for all facility staff. Policies will soon follow, so stay tuned.

I'm sure everyone is re-living Katrina experiences and we should be aware that the fifth anniversary of the storm is Sunday. All the news, pictures and attention will rightfully trigger post traumatic stress and trauma, so we should be cognizant of the underlying psychological disorders in everyone who suffered due to the hurricane and the aftermath. This could affect the mood and behavior, particularly of kids in custody; even if they do not remember the events, many of the adults around them do remember. If it is too much, just turn the TV off and go for a walk, and reflect on where we are today.

On that note, I will close with my thanks for all you do, every day, to meet the mission, with the hope that you find balance, as I too, will try to do.

Sincerely,
"Doc" *Dr. Mary Livers*

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